

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Situation in Czech Coal Mines

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coal mines:

the following situation obtains in the Czech

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a. In the hard coal mines at Ostrava (near the Polish frontier), production is suffering because of a lack of skilled workers. Whereas in previous years as much as 50 percent of the total number of miners has come from families who have been working the coal mines for generations, at present only 8.7 percent of the total is made up of skilled workers. The remainder have been recruited without regard to mining skill. As a result, there are only 3,000 groups with a total of approximately 15,000 miners, whose work is up to Stachanov standards (i.e. surpassing the quotas set for them).*

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b. Although the output per man per working hour has increased 14.2 percent during the first nine months of 1949 compared with the first nine months of 1947, total production has increased only 8.6 percent because of a greater rate of absenteeism. During the first three quarters of 1947, 927,585 man hours were lost through unexcused absenteeism. During the first three quarters of 1949, man hours totaling 1,307,400 were lost for this reason.

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c. In the soft coal mines at Most (Bohemia), unexcused absenteeism has also increased but not in the same proportion. Over the same periods the number of man hours lost increased from 548,406 to 591,589.

d. Recent monthly figures for unexcused absenteeism at Ostrava are:

June 1949	7,720 man days
July 1949	8,549 man days
August 1949	9,954 man days

e. Similar figures for the soft coal mines at Most are:

June 1949	1,822 man days
July 1949	2,268 man days
August 1949	3,107 man days

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g. Commencing 1 December 1949 new regulations will be effected to increase production and cut time losses. The program calls for paying lower basic salaries and for increased compensation where it is earned. It is hoped that this program will force absentees to work in order to earn a regular minimum wage. It is also hoped that bonus inducements will create a greater number of Stachanovite workers.

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h. [redacted] Czech coal mines have 95 percent of the labor force required to meet production ends. However, the efficiency of the total labor force is impaired by the presence of too many temporary workers. In addition, the age of the average miner is relatively high, raising problems of physical endurance. This situation will deteriorate further unless corrective measures are taken.

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[redacted] Comment: [redacted] only 5 percent of the total workers are in the Stachanov classification. This would suggest that the total number of miners at Ostrava is approximately 300,000. (sic)

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